Citywide Public Involvement Standards Task Force

June 25, 2003 meeting minutes

Task Force member Attendance: Some members did not sign-in.
Bryan Aptekar, Parks; JoAnn Bowman, Bowman Consulting; Laurel Butman,
OMF; Nancy Chapman, APNBA; Carlotta Collette, SEUL; Krystyn Czarnecka,
North Parkrose Target Area; Frank Dixon, NWNW; Rey Espana, Latino Network;
Jim Gladson, BES; Tim Hall, Water; Bill Hoffman, PDOT; Brian Hoop, ONI;
Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong, SEUL; Sy Kornbrodt, Mult. Co. CAC; Jeanne Lawson,
Jeanne Lawson Associates; David Lane, ONI; Patti McCoy, Columbia Corridor
Association; Julie Odell, Hayhurst; Jake Oken-Berg, youth; Betsy Radigan,
NPNS; Mary Volm, OMF; Corinne Weber, SWNI.

Guests in Attendance: Susan Hartnett, BOP; Becky Chiaro, Ombuds Office.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved for May 28, 2003 meeting.

Summaries of constituency discussion groups

Below are highlights of report-backs from most of the discussion groups. Complete notes of each discussion will be distributed at July meeting.

African American and Communities of Color: JoAnn Bowman reporting.

- Participants share commonalties of issues about public involvement.
- □ Didn't know which City planning meetings were taking place, where meetings take place and time of day they occur.
- Costs associated with public involvement.
- Bureaus should utilize ethnic newspapers.
- Not familiar with how to get on stakeholder lists.
- Use existing organized forums and meeting places, such as churches.

City staff: Laurel Butman reporting.

Challenges

- Not enough time and resources.
- □ Lack of diverse active participants to work with.
- Busy city agenda, too many active issues City working on.
- Want consistency with neighborhood coalitions.

Good

- Clarity about purpose and message.
- □ Flexibility to respond and change approaches.
- Engage stakeholders in developing plans.
- Support from managers and directors.

Business: Nancy Chapin reporting.

- Balance business and neighborhood engagement.
- □ Notification needs to tell the whole process, when something is a multi-month process, and there are gaps in time.
- □ Provide adequate funding to mitigate impacts of projects on businesses.
- Business Associations need help in disseminating info from leaders of their groups to their constituents. Don't expect info to get out without funding.
- Early notification and often throughout a project.
- Decision-makers with authority need to be at meetings.
- □ Want ability to influence a decision, otherwise wasting time going to meetings.
- □ Want to help think through the timing of a project.

Youth: Jake Oken-Berg reporting.

- Graphic representation gets point across.
- Utilize the web more effectively.
- Meetings need to be in evening. Not during school hours.
- □ Want a two-way dialogue, to know how their feedback is being used.
- Require more youth on task forces and boards.

PI Consultants: Jeanne Lawson reporting.

- □ Terminology, what do the definitions mean? Standards? Guidelines?
- □ Resistance to standards. Prefer flexibility, not one size fits all.
- □ There will always be opposition & controversy, doesn't mean bad PI process.
- □ Accountability, communicate how information was used.
- Assessment at beginning of project needed.
- □ Staff training. We know what the best practices are but staff don't know them.
- Need PI project evaluation at end of projects.

North Portland: Betsy Radigan reporting.

- □ Citizens feel cut out of process. Staff support for PI is very superficial.
- More city staff who are dedicated to support citizens to succeed in advocating for them, to help them understand how the City works.
- Neighborhood Needs Assessment process brought back.

West Portland: Frank Dixon reporting.

- Neighborhood Needs assessment important, so citizens can say what they want from government.
- □ Show on City web site what are key projects and timelines that bureaus are working on, who to contact, etc.
- □ Implement an ONI based evaluation process.

Immigrants/refugees/APANO/Latino Network: Rey Espana reporting.

- □ City needs to recognize that City demographics diversifying.
- Implement standards that acknowledge changing demographics.
- □ Lack of clarity between public info and public involvement.
- Professional development in culturally appropriate PI skills.

Inner Southeast

- □ City is not working with residents. Lack of respect. Adversarial relationship.
- More financial support for neighborhood system. Support decreasing.
- City needs to come clean with info.
- Need to meet public involvement standards before implementing projects.
- □ Need to hear what problems are that a project is supposed to address.
- Dedicate % of city budget to go towards neighborhood support system.
- Inequity between how neighborhoods are funded.

Comments on constituency meetings

- Recognize that Portland is way ahead of most other cities so we are not going to be able to easily copy best models of other cities.
- □ Frustration that much is broken, much to do.
- □ Confusion between public info and public involvement.
- Neighborhood Needs Assessment is common with neighborhood groups. It's a good place to bring citizens into constructive and proactive dialogue w/City.
- □ City staff gets caught in the middle. Need to identify where Council is in empowering citizens, neighborhood associations, and business groups.
- Need clarification if this taskforce is focused on staff, bureau responsibilities, or empowering neighborhood associations and other citizen groups.
- □ Staff wants civility and professionalism from neighborhood/citizen advocates.
- □ Issue of what the word standards means will be a key issue to resolve.
- □ Recognize increase in immigrant/refugee and communities of color and City's responsibility to build capacity to support integration into local civic process.
- Need to acknowledge the disconnect between staff and citizens is deep.
- Standards should address what PI partners expectations should be.
- □ Focus on what is done well. Hold other bureaus accountable to improve.
- Need gap analysis to identify differences between staff & citizens' concerns.
- ☐ Give copies of letter from commissioners supporting this process.

Public Involvement Taskforce structure and process

- Laurel presented structure and timeline. Description of role of each of the partners in this project: Steering Committee, Taskforce, ONI, Council, and Working sub-committees.
- Process issues that need to be answered: Mission, what are we going to work on, how to review existing bureau practices, updating citizen involvement principles, process for how working groups will make decisions, what will our recommendations apply to, etc.
- □ Add business associations, public involvement consultants to stakeholder list.
- Clarification that some of the process issues will need to be addressed throughout the taskforce's life.
- General agreement that there is support for the organizational chart.

Public Involvement Taskforce timeline

- □ Laurel presented timeline.
- □ Tight timeline to finalize recommendations before budget process begins.
- Need to continue to send email list all attachments and let people know they are invited to meetings. Need to distinguish what are the key documents so email list knows what are the pertinent documents to read.
- □ Acknowledge that Council budgeting process goes on through the spring so we have an opportunity to deal with this into 2004.
- Identify what issues are related to the budget so that budget neutral issues can be addressed at a later time.
- Suggestion to organize timeline around problem identification, categorization of issues, how to address them, and finally how we will resolve the problems.
- Need to focus on defensible process and not jump to assumptions about outcomes on a timeline.
- □ Group supports extending timeline to January to allow more time for working groups and for staff and public to be part of the feedback loop.
- □ Follow the Regulatory Reform effort and focus on top 5 issues we identify.
- □ Need annual work session w/Council, neighborhood & business associations.

Mission, outcomes, principles

- Julie reviews mission and outcomes.
- Discussion on proposal that we need to emphasize our starting point is the Principles of Public Involvement already adopted by Council in 1996.
- Portland Development Commission is responsible to their commission only.
 Question if our recommendations affect the PDC.
- □ IAP2 core values have points to incorporate into our City's Principles.
- Question if the City Council can be held accountable to the recommendations.
- Need to incorporate issue of accountability into the mission statement.
- Concern that City bureaus are being told to ensure implementation of these recommendations without adequate resources and time.
- Group agrees to develop objectives instead of outcomes. Listing outcomes so early may turn off people who will question the integrity of our process.
- Need to use the word Public instead of Citizen to acknowledge non-citizens.
- □ SW Community Plan is a good template to give teeth to the public involvement principles and would be stronger than the principles.
- Concern the Principles prioritize neighborhood associations as core to City's PI efforts. Do not include diverse communities of color. Issue of diversity needs to be addressed in the mission.
- □ Need to expand the mission to acknowledge role of neighborhood associations, citizens, and other groups.

Next steps:

 Steering Committee meetings on Thursdays, 11:30 AM, at Office of Management and Finance, Portland Building, 12th Floor, Laurel's office.